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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Douglas J. MacEachin
Director of Soviet Analysis

SUBJECT: Possible Use of Forced Labor at
Chernobyl'

Issues raised

1. This is to apprise you of our continuing efforts to ascertain whether the Soviets are using forced labor in cleanup operations at Chernobyl'. Thus far, the evidence is inconclusive. [REDACTED]

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4. Three forced labor camps are located within 100 kilometers of the Chernobyl' Nuclear Power Plant. The forced labor camp at Mozyr' lies about 90 kilometers to the northwest with access by a hard-surfaced road; a camp to the south near Kiev is 130 kilometers by road from the power plant. Each of these camps confines 1,700 to 1,800 prisoners. The camp in the city of Chernigov, about 90 kilometers by rail from the power plant, houses 600 to 700 forced laborers. In addition, seven other forced labor camps are located within 161 kilometers of the plant. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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6. [REDACTED] Soviet
use of forced labor in the mining, processing and utilization of
radioactive matter:

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-- In the 1950s, political prisoners were used in the
extraction of uranium in Kolyma [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] prisoners
were being used in the extraction of uranium there.
[REDACTED] prisoners
under capital sentence were sent to uranium mines,
where most died within two years. [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] prisoners
were used in the extraction of uranium. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the loss of life was high. [REDACTED]

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-- [REDACTED]

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-- A former political prisoner now in Isreal has written
a book that locates 41 camps where prisoners were
used for the extraction and processing of uranium
ore, or for labor in institutions dealing with
nuclear submarines. [REDACTED] camps in more
than half of the locations pinpointed by the author,
but does not indicate the use of prisoners in the
nuclear weapons program. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Our best judgment is that the Soviets have used forced labor extensively in uranium mining. At least in recent years they probably have not used forced labor in nuclear weapons production because of security considerations and because skilled labor is needed. At Chernobyl', however, unskilled labor is needed for such tasks as purifying the soil and destroying forests. [REDACTED]

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7. While working in an open area forced laborers require constant guarding. Usually they are confined in a fenced and heavily secured work area having guard towers along the periphery--similar to that which surrounds the Chernobyl' reactor area. [REDACTED]

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8. There are indications that the Soviets are keeping contaminated vehicles within the 30 kilometer evacuation zone and that vehicles bringing equipment and supplies to the power plant are transloaded at the border of the 30 kilometer zone to prevent contamination. These transloading areas would be ideal places to use forced laborers; they would be located away from the main area of activity and they would provide a place for forced laborers to fulfill manual labor tasks of loading and unloading. [REDACTED]

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9. Considering the suitability of unskilled forced labor for many of the cleanup jobs at Chernobyl', and considering past Soviet willingness to use forced labor in hazardous work, the use of forced labor is plausible--but not confirmed. [REDACTED]

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10. We will continue to monitor all relevant traffic for any indications that forced labor is present in Chernobyl'. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
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SOVA/DJMacEachin, [] (5 June 1986)

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